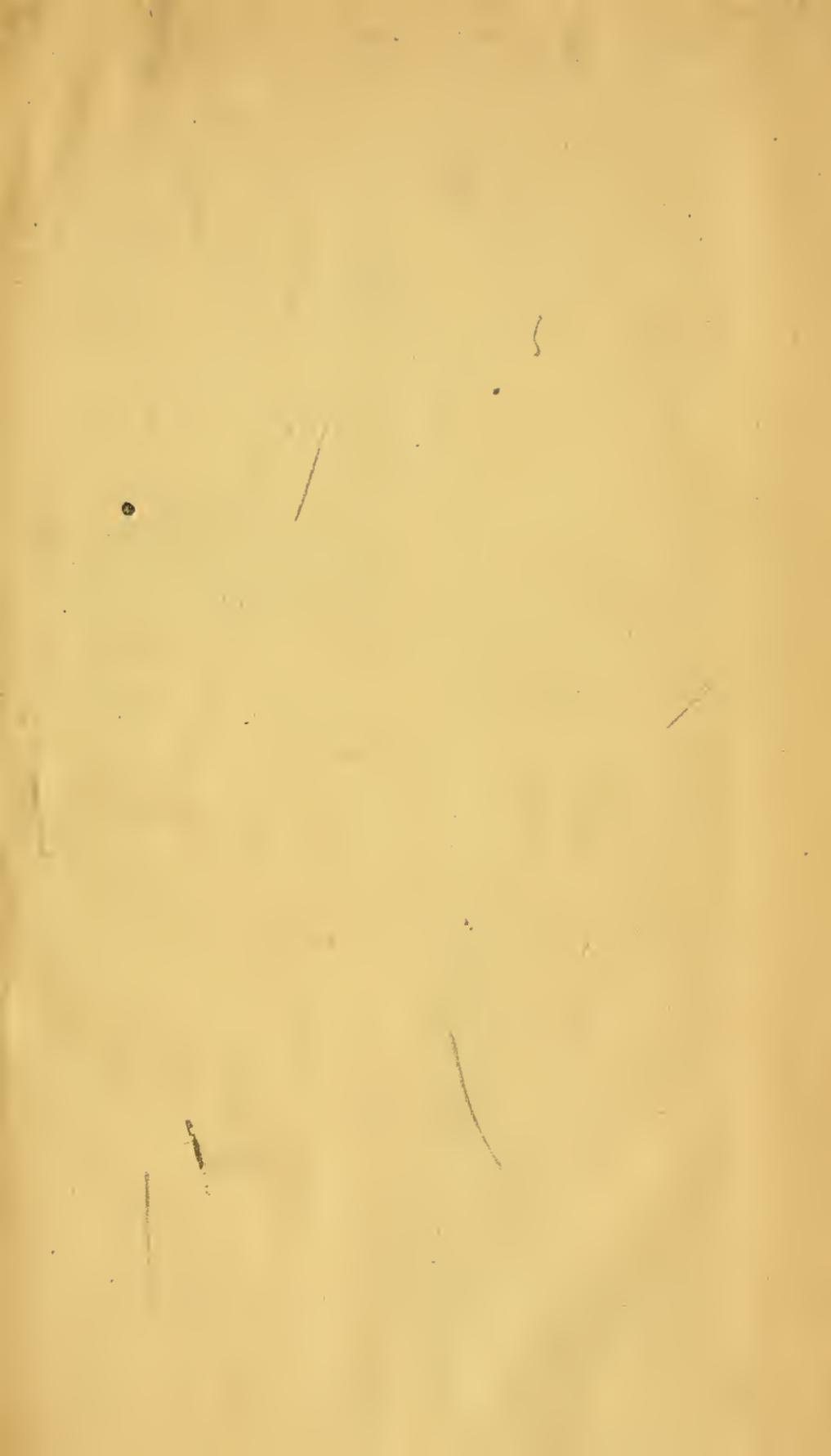


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SONGS  
OF A  
SOJOURN:  
ORIGINAL PIECES,

CHIEFLY DESCRIPTIVE OF  
TROPICAL PHENOMENA

PECULIAR SUPERSTITIONS OF AFRICAN SLAVES,

WRITTEN DURING SOME YEARS RESIDENCE IN BRITISH  
GUIANA, SOUTH AMERICA.

BY WILLIAM M'CALMONT,

A youth of many sorrows, some may say  
A fool in vision dreaming life away,---  
His Harp a reed snatched from the wild caress,  
That nature gave it in its wilderness;  
And if such pandian pipe have piteous tone,  
It suits the soul misfortune made its own.

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## PREFATORY REMARKS.

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The following Pieces owe their publication, at the present time, to the distressing circumstance of myself and family having embarked in the *Navarino*, Captain George Craggs, from Liverpool, bound to New York, on the 18th Oct. 1832, and during a tremendous gale from W. which lasted throughout the 8th, 9th and 10th of Nov., when near the Banks of Newfoundland, the Ship was so much damaged and the crew so mutilated by the effects of the tempest, that the Captain was obliged to bear up for the Cove of Cork, where we ultimately arrived on the 23rd November.

In extenuation of critical asperities I may quote H. K. WHITE'S exclamation to his lyre :—

“ No hand thy diapason o'er,  
“ Well skilled, I throw with sweep sublime;  
“ For me no academic lore,  
“ Has taught the solemn strain to soar,  
“ Or build the polished rhyme ! ”

My literary acquirements have been mostly gained in the self taught hours snatched from a laborious profession in a torrid clime; but the book of Nature was open to me, and the unveiled beauties of a tropical midnight, casting her starry canopies over the interminable forests of South America, cloathed in palls of electric fluid and weeping with the mournful voices of her birds and animals, could not fail to elevate and instruct a mind, whose sweetest resource, in its many afflictions, was in attempting a faint transcript of the beauties of universal nature teeming in its sphere.

Gratified I shall feel, in the highest degree, if my unschooled wood notes, though failing in their feeble efforts to describe the mysterious grandeur and awful horrors brooding in the elements of a Southern Zone, may strengthen, in the minds of the reader, those feelings of reverential awe which revert from scenes of sublimity to the Almighty author or the true sublime. Or if they may have stimulated the exertions of the active philanthropist, in emancipating from the chains of slavery and superstition, the degraded Africans of our colonies.

With a warm and affectionate *Vale longum Vale* to the friends who have assisted those few of my pieces to the light, and the prof'er of my warm and heartfelt prayers, I subscribe myself

Their Obliged

and devoted servant,

The Author,

Cork, January, 22nd. 1833.



THE

# VISION OF THE EARTHQUAKE

---

A voice from the East; A voice from the West; A voice from the four Winds; A voice against the Bridegroom and the Bride and A voice against the whole People.

See Extract from JOSEPHUS in Note (a).

---

My sleep was full of phantoms—I awoke,  
Then too burst slumbering Nature—Night's dusk wings  
Formed one grand arch of light and thunderings  
With a loud whirlwind's groan!—The spell was broke  
That hushed the things of life—unearthly mock  
Gave loathsome owls and vampires! On my sight  
A flock of storm-birds passed in weary flight,  
Whose low lank wings and gusty shriek bespoke  
Old Ocean's roosts, in elemental blight,  
Were scattered where some wild tornado broke!  
And something rushed behind of scathing and affright.

I watched those lone birds as they fled on high,  
And higher still, with faint and dying sound,  
Seeming to seek an earthless ey'ry,  
'Till lost in darkness, then the bursting sky  
Wrapped them with one bright fiery pall around!  
I, too, seemed doomed—my mansion, and the ground  
Beneath me, rose in high convulsion, where  
I, prostrate was thrown, shrieks, spells and prayer  
In that wild cavern groaning were not drowned,  
'Till Earth was rocked to sleep, and man deliverance found. (b)

What boots, I cried, the beauties of this zone,  
 Robing the land in nature's brightest hues,  
 When man, proud man, usurping, still imbrues  
 His hands in blood of serfs, and stamps upon  
 The toil worn brow deep vengeance.—That sad groan,  
 When their galled sinews feel the iron type  
 Imprinting slavery's lines, and daily stripe,  
 The weeping voice of Pity claims her own ;—  
 It's record is in Heaven—and renews  
 In vengeful echoes when destruction strews  
 The whirlwind's answer in the earthquake's tone !

Here, all but man was bright—his every mood  
 Was low intrigue, was murder, lust and strife,  
 Sapping the social bonds of human life :—  
 I saw the slave in forest solitude  
 Culling fell roots to pay his wasted blood  
 For brand and stripe—I saw the poisoned bowl  
 Drained by his master—heard the exulting howl  
 Of men whose natures like their dark frames stood !  
 And while convulsion death's dim shadows strewed,  
 O'er the poor victims quivering limbs they laughed,  
 That white man's flesh would grow like theirs by oboe craft ! (d)

My wanderings were like man's escaped the dead,  
 For oh ! my inmost nature suffer'd change—  
 My voice of sorrowing came in tone so strange,  
 I grew a thing that seemed itself to dread !—  
 My guardian power, methought, had from me fled,  
 And I stalked through each lane and city square  
 The ghostly herald of a doomed despair—  
 I shrieked, but passed unnoticed, as a shade,  
 Beholding though unseen,—my daily range  
 Seemed to be with the darkest fates that shed  
 Vials of wrath o'er man's devoted head.

## CANTO II.

I heard a voice, at morn, say " what art thou ?  
 Greeting the world in tears and plaints and gloom,"  
 Few hours, death's chills were on the infant's brow,—  
 Ere night 'twas prisoned in a second womb :  
 In shades of night again I heard the voice  
 Say " thou hast 'scaped the death, rejoice ! rejoice ! "

" God bless thee, boy," cried hoary Age to Youth,  
 Who bound for northern schools, farewells had given—  
 A child of Nature skilled in songs of ruth—  
 " Go," cried the sacred tones, " thou child of Heaven,  
 Dip thy young plume in Israel's ancient tears,—  
 For thou must sing o'er shroudless sepulchres ! "

I saw two fond ones to the altar lie,  
 With joy past utterance—yea, they kissed and clung  
 As if indeed one flesh, so joyfully  
 They drank love's opiate—The viewless tongue  
 Cried " Ha ! go pray ere ye again must wed  
 Your mother earth,"—full soon their bridal bed.

Close crawled an old man doubled 'neath five score,  
 His gums new toothing, who, with idiot stare,  
 An oaten reed in place of crutches bore,  
 And chattering oft, he asked " If death were near ? "  
 No voice gave answer, then he laughed aloud,  
 Sketching with oaten straw, pall, skeleton and shroud.

Amazed, I turned my swimming eyes to heaven,  
 And lo ! the storm-birds, heralds of my flight,  
 Robed in bright flames, from spectre clouds were driven,  
 Screaming their terrors round the arch of night ;  
 While worldless tongues this wail of terror gave—  
 Man, gird ye on the garments of the grave !

Now earth began to reel like storm tossed seas,  
 And quivering, rose and fell in clayey waves—  
 To hopeless wails were turned the midnight glees,  
 Whose revellers, howling, leapt o'er yawning caves.—  
 The sky turned blood, and all heaven's lights grew then  
 Red shrouds of judgment o'er the sons of men.

But those shocks ceased, then too, despairing cries,  
And awful silence reigned 'till burst the dawn,  
When rose loud laughter's mirthful extacies,  
And ancient sins regained the hearts of man ;  
Scarce 'scaped the death, wild wassail all partook,  
As if last night, nought but their memory shook.

But, as all revelled without hymn of praise,  
A still, small voice smote on the earth and air :—  
Oh ! people shudder'd, for in hollow ways  
'Mid lute and harp sounds too, its warnings were—  
Alas ! it gave like tones of passing bell,  
Those wails of horror o'er the citadel :—

“ Prepare ! prepare ! even now the sulphery gust  
Howls horrid elegy beneath your path !  
Oh ! man, will only bend him in the dust  
When desolation shrouds him in its wrath—  
'Tis come, 'tis come, the mighty hour of fate ;  
Oh ! who shall help when all are desolate.”

And lo ! the mountain bursts and vomits o'er  
That death-doomed city, showers of sulphery fire,  
The sea back trembling fled its ancient shore  
And fiery serpents wreathed in ariel fire—  
Angels of earth and sea, and air, combine  
To exile man, each cried “ thou art not mine ! ”

Earth chased the deep like ocean's tempest swells,  
And ancient skeletons rose on that flood,  
While opening vaults would echo churchyard bells  
Where thousands fled for succour. Temples stood  
'Till their bells rocked one hollow-toned farewell,  
Telling that all had perished in the knell !

Masters clung to their slave chains.—Many took  
The rocking earth with firm convulsive grasp—  
Death was a luxury, long, long forsook  
Thousands who doled their spirits gasp by gasp,  
Who, half interred, on skull and cross bone tread  
Amid that resurrection of the dead !

Spirit of Horror ! down, down all descending  
In one chaotic crash from earth now sever,  
Their last, wild shriek with judgment thunders blending,  
Shall haunt that Isle of agony for ever !—  
Snapping the chains of thraldom, it shall come  
To guard the tree forbidden here to bloom.

God of my wanderings ! those were scenes of dread,  
 Where art thou now, proud city of the sun ?  
 In thine own site, deep, deep sepulchred—  
 None left to weep the havoc doomed and done :  
 The warning voice that o'er the earthquake broods,  
 Is heard no more in thy seared solitudes.

Ne'er rose morn's golden light with livelier hue,  
 When all was life, than when that vale of tombs  
 Was shrouded 'neath a watery mantle blue,  
 Whereon fell shades of riven Tropic blooms :—  
 The mangrove, cedar, and the tall palm leaf,  
 Sweeping the earth like virgin plumes of grief.

While hungry ravens fled to ocean's rocks,  
 And birds of passage shrieked in backward flight,  
 The lone dogs howl—and hollow echo mocks  
 Those sounds outliving that doomed city's blight ;  
 Wildly they sought their masters day by day  
 And echo to their howls cryed— “ where are they ? ”

Yet, on the scorched shrubs of a fiery mount,  
 One little lone bird chaunted mournfully,  
 Such pretty warblings from its silvery fount,  
 That nature claimed its freedom—It would flee  
 One little space, then lingering on the wing,  
 Like one surviving lute, o'er desolation sing !

Sing on, sing on, thou melancholy bird,  
 Sweet sylph ! whose sorrowings wak'st the mountain zone—  
 Nature shall burst in verdure—and her bard  
 Shall hail the plaintive cadence of thy tone ;  
 His the sad song that mourns the scorched vine—  
 Hailing the clove and spice, the artless tenours thine.

Oh ! is there none to weep thee tears of blood,  
 Thou once proud city, now in ruin hurled—  
 Lo ! one survives, if ancient Idiot could ;  
 Little recked he his own late vanished world—  
 Strange his escape, for he had crawled away  
 Afar, where slept the infant of a day.

Here bent the spectre of an hundred years,  
 Above the infant of a sun's revolve,  
 There the dark lake of human sepulchres !  
 An earthless trio these. Let wisdom solve  
 Why that old carle seemed blest, as if his heart  
 Of weeping nature claimed no kindred part.

As change the hues of summer's phantom sky,  
 So doth man's soul.—The sacred living light  
 May darken down in man's mortality,  
 Shedding no ray in age's mental night;—  
 Yet lives a twilight in the soul that sends  
 One heavenly halo ere the casket rends.

So the soul's ray burst on that skinny form,  
 A flame of terror oped his shriveled eye,  
 Giving the scenery of that fiery storm  
 A dirge of shrieks composed of tear and sigh!  
 For he was of those infant-dreams bereft,  
 That his own age's desolation left.

“ Ah, woe is me ! ” he cried,—ah ! wilder'd thing,  
 In vain thy eyes o'er nature's fragments roam,—  
 'Twere well for thee would some sweet slumbering  
 Return with one bright vision of thy home !  
 So would thy loved ones in thy dreams return,  
 And sooth thy slumbering hours, and weep that thou shouldst mourn

That glimmering chaos severing life from death,  
 Some fated men have known—but, oh ! such dread  
 When warning voices call them—and their breath  
 Hangs trembling on the precincts of the dead !  
 The hovering soul prepares from earth to roam,  
 When once the sacred voice has called it home.

The ancient man sank into that dark fit,  
 But oh ! his founts of feeling ceased to weep,  
 Yet, ere his eyelids closed, they did emit  
 A flash that told such call was in his sleep !  
 Then death's wan hues came o'er him and I knew,  
 His soul obeyed the call, and with the angel flew.

Contending throes of dark remembrance  
 Thrilled through my heart, with cruel pangs oppressed,  
 And silvery lights burst round with joyful glance,  
 Quelling the vision imp, that bruised my breast,  
 'Twas the meridian sun's restoring ray,  
 Ushering my trembling spirit into day !

## NOTES.

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NOTE (a) Among the many awful and mysterious signs which preceded the final destruction of Jerusalem, the following instance of inspired human warning, before the conflagration of the temple, stands unprecedented for that indescribable and unearthly feeling of horror with which it strikes the human heart :—Before sunset (says JOSEPHUS, B. vi. C. v.) chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour, were seen running among the clouds and surrounding the city. Moreover, at the feast which we call Pentecost, as the Priests were going into the inner temple, as their custom was to perform their sacred ministrations ; they said that in the first place they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, as the sound of a great multitude saying “*let us remove hence.*” But what was still more terrible, there was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a husbandman, who, four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in peace and prosperity, came to that feast of tabernacles whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the courts of the Temple, began on a sudden to cry aloud “*A voice from the East, A voice from the West, A voice from the four Winds, A voice against the Bridegroom and the Bride, and A voice against the whole People.*” This was his cry as he went about by day and by night, through the streets of the city. However, certain of the most eminent of the citizens had great indignation at this cry of his, and seized the man, and inflicted on him many severe stripes ; yet did he not either say any thing for himself, or any thing peculiar to those that chastised him, but still he went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon, our rulers supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped ’till his bones were laid bare ; yet did he not make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turning his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was “*Woe, woe to Jerusalem.*” And when Albinus, for he was then our procurator, asked him who he was ? and whence he came ? and why he uttered such words ? he made no answer to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy cry, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him. Now during all the time that passed before

the war began, this man ceased not to utter every day those lamentable words, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." Nor did he give ill words to those who beat him, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was loudest at the festivals, and he continued the strain for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw in earnest his presage fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round upon the walls he cried out with his utmost force, "Woe, woe to the City, again, and to the People, and to the Holy House," and just as he added at the last, "woe, woe to myself, also," a stone from one of the engines smote him, and killed him immediately.

(b) The following is an extract from "an account of the eruption of the Souffreire of St. Vincent and the earthquake of the 30th. April, 1812." It is an accurate description of those sublime, but awful catastrophes which the inhabitants of the Tropical Islands often experience:—Just as the plantation bells rang 12 at noon, on Monday, the 27th. an awful and dreadful crash from the mountain, with a severe concussion of the earth and a tremulous noise in the air, alarmed all around it. The ignition of the fiery furnace was proclaimed in a moment, by a vast column of black, thick smoke, like that issuing from the furnace of an immense glass house. The same awful scene presented itself on Tuesday and Wednesday, still gathering more thick and terrific for miles around the dismal and half obscured mountain. On Thursday, the reflection of the rising sun on this immense body of curling vapour, was sublime beyond imagination. Any comparison of the Glaciers of the Andes, or Cordilleras with it, can but feebly convey the idea of the fleey whiteness and brillancy of this awful column of intermingled and wreathed smoke and clouds. It afterwards assumed a more sulphurous cast, like what we call thunder clouds, and in the course of the day a ferruginous and sanguine appearance with a much livelier action in the ascent, and a more extensive dilation, as if almost freed from every obstruction. In the afternoon the noise was incessant and resembled the approach of thunder drawing nearer and nearer, with a vibration that affected the feeling and hearing, but as yet there was no convulsive motion or sensible earthquake. Terror and consternation now seized all beholders. The Caribs stationed at Morne Rondo, at the foot of the Souffreire, abandoned their houses with their live stock and every thing they possessed, and flew precipitately towards town. The negroes became confused, forsook their work, looked to the mountain, and as it shook, trembled, with the dread of what they could neither understand or describe. The birds fell to the ground overpowered with showers of heated ashes, unable to keep themselves on the wing; the cattle were starving for want of food, as not a blade of grass or a leaf was to be found. About four o'clock the noise became alarming, and just before

sunset the clouds reflected a bright copper colour suffused with fire. Scarcely had the day closed when the flames burst pyramidically from the crater through the mass of smoke, the rolling of thunder became more awful and deafening, electric flashes quickly succeeded, attended by loud claps. Shortly after seven, p. m., the mighty chaldron was seen to simmer, and the ebullition of lava to break out in the N. W. side. This, immediately after boiling over the orifice and flowing a short way, was opposed by the acclivity of a higher point of land, over which it was impelled by the vast tide of liquid fire which drove it on, forming the figure V in grand illumination. Sometime after, the ebullition slackened, or was insufficient to urge it over the obstructing hill, it recoiled like a reffluent billow from the rocks, and then again rushed forward impelled by fresh supplies, and scaling every obstacle, carrying rocks and woods together in its course over the slope of the mountain, until it precipitated itself down some vast ravine, concealed from our sight by the intervening ridges of Morne Rondo. Vast bodies of fire were seen projected from the crater, and bursting, fell back into it, and over it, on the surrounding bushes, which were instantly set in flames. About four hours from the lava's boiling over the crater, it reached the sea, as we could see from the reflection of the fire and the electric flashes attending it; about half past one, another stream of lava was seen descending to the eastwards, towards Rebecca. The thundering noise of the mountain that had been so formidable hitherto, now mingled in the sullen monotonous roar of the rolling lava, became so terrible that dismay was almost turned into despair. At this time the first earthquake was felt; this was followed by showers of cinders that fell with the hissing noise of hail, nearly two hours. This dreadful rain of stones and fire lasted upwards of an hour, and was again succeeded by cinders from three until six o'clock in the morning; earthquake followed earthquake, almost momentarily, or rather this part of the Island was in a continued state of oscillation;—not agitated by shocks, vertical or horizontal, but undulated like water shaken in a bowl. The break of day, if such it could be called, was truly terrific, darkness was only visible at 8 o'clock, and the birth of May dawned like the day of Judgment; a chaotic gloom enveloped the mountain, and an impenetrable haze hung over the sea, with black sluggish clouds of a sulphurous cast. The whole Island was covered with favilla, cinders, scoria, and broken masses of volcanic matter. It was not until the afternoon that the muttering noise of the mountain sank gradually into a solemn yet suspicious silence. Such were the particulars of this sublime and tremendous scene, from its commencement to its catastrophe. To describe the effects would be a task truly distressing.

(c) One midnight, during my residence in British Guiana, I leaped from my hammoc with an insupportable feeling of suffocation, and a sulphurous smell which caused me to stand at a win-

dow, fronting the sea, for better respiration. The ocean seemed from its unusual hollow and reiterated rumbling, to be strangely agitated. I conceived that a whirlwind was arising from its pitchy surface, and my conjecture was in a few moments confirmed, by seeing the palm and mangrove trees, which skirted the shore, bend to the earth, and the cane and coffee vegetation creaking, as if under the pressure of rushing waters from windward. At that instant, a flock of sea birds, the precursors of the gust, seemed emerging from beneath a sheet of electric fluid, which now described a sublime arch of nearly half the eastern horizon—On nearing me, their melancholy shrieking, at such an hour, cloathed as they seemed to me, with robes of fire, and skimming on the wings of the wind, those omens of tropical convulsion thrilled my soul with vague terror, and excited superstitious feelings worthy of an ancient Roman. I was recalled from the reveries arising from this insulated glance of midnight tropical scenery, by the rumbling of subterraneous thunders, succeeded by a severe shock of earthquake, which threw me with some violence to the farther end of my chamber. The sudden torpor that struck my feelings during the shock was roused by the instantaneous howls of the negroes around me. Those human sounds sang like an awful tenor to the voice of the subterranean thunders rolling beneath me. All in a few moments was hushed again in the stillness and slumbers of night. The awful feelings aroused by those few minutes of a tropical midnight, produced the 'VISION OF THE EARTHQUAKE.' The above shock was severely felt in many of the West India Islands. In Trinidad, the noise in the town was tremendous, accompanied by concussions resembling the reports of artillery. On Sunday evening last, says the Grenada Free Press of 7th December, 1831, about twenty minutes before 8 o'clock in the evening, the inhabitants of this town were suddenly alarmed by the subterranean noise which usually precedes a heavy concussion of earthquake, which was closely followed by three distinct shocks, so severe, that every object seemed to be in motion. The cracking of beams, roofs, and furniture, was terrific. We were in church where the scene was, indeed, appalling. The first shock, which we could distinctly feel came in the direction from south to north, shook the whole building, and disturbed the congregation, many of whom started up, under fearful alarm, which was greatly increased by the second, following a few seconds after, much more severe. Every object, particularly the roof, was strongly agitated; the heavy chandeliers danced with a vertical motion, the bell gave three hollow, but distinct sounds, which added to the consternation of the congregation, as they could not but suppose that the tower and steeple were giving way:—the copper on the roof made a noise like thunder which added to the rattling of the pew doors, from the sudden rushing out of the occupants, made every one believe that the building was crumbling into ruins. The strong agitation of each continued, we conceive for upwards of 30 seconds, yet, strange to say, notwith-

standing the length and severity of the concussion, when it subsided, and the affrighted inhabitants had again so far recovered from their consternation as to examine its effects, nothing was found to be materially injured, beyond some slight cracks in stone buildings. This can only be accounted for, by the agitated motion of the earth having been almost vertical, instead of undulating, by which, fixed objects were not thrown off the centre of gravity.

(d) "Their superstitious feelings, (says Adams, in his flowers of modern voyages, speaking of the Congo Nations) are of the grossest description: here, as in many other parts of Africa, the negroes place their chief confidence in supposed charms, called *Fetitches*. Every individual has his fetitche, and some possess a dozen, which they regard as their tutelary deities, and a complete proof against every imaginary evil; yet, there is nothing so vile in nature as not to serve for a negroe's fetitche—the horn, the hoof, the hair, the teeth, and the bones of all manner of quadrupeds; the feathers, beaks, bones and claws of birds; the skull, the head, and skins of snakes; the shell and fins of fishes, pieces of old iron, copper—seeds of plants, and sometimes a mixture of all or most of them strung together, make up the holy thing, which the Congo savage venerates, and in which he puts his trust. Their magical consultations are held under the boughs of the *Ficus Religiosus*." Obea, or Oboe, is, strictly speaking, the superstition and practice of magic; but, it has, by the ingenuity of the old African slaves, as a dreadful retaliation for their wrongs, branched into a murderous system throughout the colonies—it is a scourge, but a secret one, running like an under current throughout the yet half savage society of African slaves, which, like the insects clinging to the defenceless parts of sea monsters, always causes torture, and often death. Wherever humanity had been outraged in the colonies, (and until gradual emancipation was enforced, on what estate was it not?) the ulterior effects of oboe meetings, were horrid, and summary instances of retribution. The oboe meeting is generally held at the period of the old African's full moon dance, in the most secret part of the estate, and sometimes on its boundaries, in the most retired watchman's house; guards are stationed at all avenues of interruption, and the interior of their pandemonium presents a motley and horrid appearance. The oboe priest is seated on a high log of wood, and his novices, who undergo, it is said, a regular initiation, stand round him in respectful attendance; his headpiece is generally the skin of some wild animal adorned with the plumage of the vulture, attached to which, the tail, in the form of a bobwig, bears a conspicuous part; various strings of beads are hung round his neck, to which are fastened the highest order of fetitches—plumes of black feathers are placed on his back and shoulders, and if he is to be unusually august, he borrows the holiday garment of *Mumbo Jumbo*. (a personage who on the negro festivals parades about with a petticoat formed of plantain leaves

often 15 feet in circumference), in his hand he holds the dried skin of a snake as his sceptre, and before him are placed a bunch of the most stupefactive and poisonous plants. On a table is placed a bag, where each individual, as he enters, deposits his fetitche. Their ceremonies commence with a song of the most savage description, and a revolving dance around the magical depositary, to which each stoops, takes up his charm, and repeats with many incantations and curses, the name of the person to be oboed, or the person who is to come under the curse of their fraternity—their charms are again deposited in the bag, after a yelling song more horrible, if possible, than the first, and the priest orders one of his attendants to blindfold the rest, which officer is again blindfolded by the master of the ceremonies; each then is led to the unholy deposit of talismans, which is again shaken with many incantations, and stooping, brings forth the first fetitche he happens to touch; if it is the grand fetitche, of which a sample is attached to their priest's breast, he is presented with a bunch of poisonous herbs, with many honours; to him devolves the horrid duty of poisoning the person who is the object of their horrifying rites:—the persons getting the first and second grand charm, are allotted as his assistants, if the execution of the deed be too difficult; or often the whole seize the first opportunity of diffusing the baneful decoction in the coffee, water, rum, soups, or other liquids of those of their white masters who have become obnoxious by the excessive punishment of any of their society, or their relatives. Without practising the administration of poison after their horrid rites, the threats of the oboe man might only be the subject of laughter to the whites who govern them. But the tyrant has reason to tremble when he hears the oboe sounds on his estate: no where does he go through the negro village, without hearing the voices of unseen persons, execrating and threatening him.—His name is whispered mysteriously, as if daemons bore it on the wings of the winds—sounds resembling the rattle in the throat of a dying person, follow him to his bedchamber; and if he is not cautious in avoiding the liquids and solids in which poisonous decoctions may be infused, he falls the prey of vertigo, convulsions, and often instant death. Love, jealousy, and the perverse passions of negro nature, give sufficient secret employment to the oboe doctor:—so much do most of the uninitiated negroes dread his mere threat, that it is often the speedy precursor of his utter uselessness, and ultimately the cause of his death. He believes he is the object of poison or assassination; he starts at every sound,—refuses to touch food or drink of any description—his eyes become wild and bloodshot, and sullen and speechless he wanders in unfrequented places, until his life is terminated by exhaustion. By marks and signs attached to things and places, the oboe man renders them sacred and inviolable; the eye of the superstitious negro is averted from the oboed object, as if it possessed a withering influence, and a certain distance from the thing made sacred is respectfully and fearfully kept.

# THE OCEAN EVE.

WRITTEN ON THE TROPICAL ATLANTIC.

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Most holy vision, ne'er before  
Was aught so radiant as the day,  
When Lucifer, in falling, bore  
The half of the bright stars away.

MOORE.

---

Slow our tall bark skims the silvery seas,  
Her sails gently bend in the gossamer breeze,  
While nought, save the dolphin, pursuing its prey,  
Ruffles ocean's calm breast where the flying fish play—  
Now gently we glide o'er the circling swell  
Where the dolphin pursued, and the flying fish fell !  
The serpent and sea dog are hushed asleep  
In their bright coral beds in the caves of the deep,  
Where the sea maiden's bowers with emeralds shine,  
Unscathed by the lead of the mariner's line.  
Oh ! the ghost of the mariner bursts from the shroud  
Darkly wrapped in the fringe of yon hearse-folding cloud,  
'Tis fleeting afar from the deeps of its doom,  
Where aloof keeps the tempest from verdure and bloom ;  
Wake and wonder ye sleepers, gross dreamers awake !  
The scenes of the liquid elysium partake.

See ! see ! the bright forms that are gathering round,  
And their workings are joyful without voice or sound :  
Oh ! the magic of nature a new world hath found—  
Aurora is dipping old ocean's red west,  
While Luna's gold crescent the east hath carress'd ;  
How glorious those orbs, like two friends as they tell,  
After meeting in splendour, ere night, their farewell !  
Fairy forms depart more lively and wending,  
On the brows of the twilight the Genii are sending.

Oh ! there peers the forest, dark strata of cloud,  
 Love's arbour and altar, sepulchre and shroud,—  
 The army in battle, the fleet of the wave ; —  
 The rock and its grotto, the hermit and cave—  
 The dome of the city, its palace and spire—  
 The snow-covered peak with its bosom on fire :  
 As the scenery of drama, they come and retire !  
 Now the rock and the grot are the lowly urn rounding—  
 The army and fleet on the forest top bounding—  
 The palace and dome grace the peak of the mountain,  
 Its bosom of flame is the gush of the fountain ;  
 Thus the chaos of clouds o'er the ocean blue,  
 Trembling vanish and boldly renew,  
 Like the wearied in war on the flight of defeat—  
 Like the charge of the brave on the coward's retreat !  
 Wake ! sleepers awake ! lest the scenes of the deep  
 Be a prelude of horror, a warning to weep !

Yea, the sea lions watch the cold mariner's bed—  
 The sprite of the sailor has burst from the dead ;  
 And the sea king his trident full loftily rears,  
 O'er the pirate's death flag and the wild buccaneer's.  
 And there o'er the lake of cerulean blue,  
 Whose skirts are the mangrove and weeping bamboo,  
 Glides through forests of fire the evil canoe !  
 Do they come with the brine bird, presaging the storm,  
 To warn with the size of their feature and form ?  
 Do they come with the porpoise, wild seer of the sea,  
 Who snorts tales of tempest in joy round our lee ?  
 Or the shark, dreaded spectre, who haunts our wake,  
 The relicts of shipwreck and death to partake ?  
 Or the work of enchantment—the sea wizard's wile  
 To pilot our bark to some magical isle ?  
 This zone of delight bears all nature's extremes,  
 Now hurricane's ire—now rainbows and beams ; (a)  
 Now shrouded in tempest, and now in a calm,  
 Sporting in havens of cocoa and palm !  
 O'er the zone of its birth the wild hurricane lowers—  
 And the red lightning glares in its centreing showers.—  
 The planets beam bloody, the waters are boiling,  
 Rouse ! rouse ! make ye ready for trouble and toiling,  
 Lest ye wake when the death-dealing tempest shall groan,  
 To startle thy visions and leave thee alone.

## NOTE.

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(a) Among all the phenomena which occasionally dispel the monotony of a voyage to the Indies, I class the scenery of the setting sun on the tropical ocean, as surpassing, in sublimity and grandeur of imagery, all others. But while teeming in its richness of light and shade, and irresistibly en chaining the eyes and imagination of the traveller by its gorgeous and fantastic changes;—the experienced mariner takes those glimpses of atmospherical pantomime as preludes of danger before the tornadoes and hurricanes, which, at periods devastate the tropical regions; and fails not to make speedy preparation for a recurrence of those sudden tempests which they too often betoken. The mariners leaning over the ship (says St. Pierre in his studies of Nature), admire in silence those aerial landscapes. Sometimes the sublime spectacle presents itself to them at the hour of prayer, and seems to invite them to lift up their hearts and their voices to Heaven. It changes its appearance every instant: what was just now luminous, becomes in a manner, coloured simply; and what is now coloured will be by and by, in the shade. The forms are as impressive as the shades. They are by turns, islands, hamlets, isles clothed with the palm trees, vast bridges stretching over rivers, fields of gold, amethysts and rubies—or rather something more than all these, they are celestial colours and forms which no pencil can pretend to imitate, and which no language can describe.

# THE OCEAN'S CALM.

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The whole might seem,  
The faded phantom of the seaman's dream.

BYRON.

---

Our bark on the Tropic sea trembling hove,  
In a holier calm than e'er stilled the deep,  
Ere in nature's enchantments she ceased to move,  
Like a hero reposed on the bosom of love,  
Or an infant with silvery sounds lulled asleep.

One hour to the twilight, the portals of bliss,  
Seemed to circle us round in that heart-treasured hour,—  
For the magic of other orbs mimicked this,  
Transcendant in loveliness, glory and power.

'Twas a miniature world on the heavens imprest,  
And angels suspended her mysteries there—  
Painting her scenes on the sky's fleecy breast,  
And writing her tales on the regions of air.

Here the crook-guided lambkins o'er mountains of blue—  
There the mitre reposed in its amethyst fane,  
And crowns were pavilioned in gold—ere the hue  
Was transformed to armed cohorts of crimson again.

Lo! it turns to a city of bright precious stones,  
Blood red as the streams from a winepress it's turning;  
Its skirts are the palms of the evergreen zones,—  
And the guards of its gates are the Seraphim burning.

Our's was voiceless amaze, lest the spell might have ended;  
Ocean's bosom, the sky mirrored down—we abode  
A lone, worldless speck on the concave suspended,  
Like the ark of life moored, near the city of God.

Apart from those haloes of splendour, there seemed  
Home caught up in glory—its soul-treasured dead,  
In heaven's own white robes of purity beamed,  
As embracing, they on to that bright city sped.

I yearned for a place in their mansions of light.  
Yea, was caught in the spirit above, but methought  
Earth's grossness was spurned by the beauteous and bright,  
For I trembled and wept in the regions I sought !

But the fountain of day, ere his lustres might fade,  
In a temple of God, all his radiance absorbs :  
On the verge of the deep its foundation is laid,  
And its domes of gold rise in the paths of the orbs.

That temple of beauty rent down—still the veils  
Of its sanctum, in ruins, more beautiful shone,  
For the prophet of Patmos seemed guarding its seals,  
While the angel of truth bore it up to her zone !

Oh, we could have gazed on those wonders, for aye,  
Pure emblem, that scenery, of mansions elysian,  
But the pale moonbeam melted the last magic ray,  
And the red planets burned up their own milky way,  
As our tribute of tears bade adieu to the vision !

# REDONDA.

---

WE were under the lee of Redonda at midnight. Its appearance was that of an inverted bell, and nearly one mile in circumference; about the height, and closely resembling Ailsa Craig, in the Irish Channel. The hosts of tropical stars were beaming in its zenith—Orion seemed guarding its southern side, while Ursa Major glowed dim in its northern distance—Streamers of electric fluid wreathed round its pinnacle, like an artificial display of fireworks, over which gleamed Aldebaron from the eye of Taurus, while the mild beams of Mercury and the red rays of Mars irradiated the waters round its rocky base, making its wild buttress dimly visible—The crescent Moon now rose over the northern point of Montseratt, and while her beams mellowed the terrific aspect of this rock of desolation, the marine *Coup d' oeil* excited solitary and awful feelings. The breeze lulled under its lee, and partially becalmed, our bark lingered upon the bosom of the waters, as if to give the beings within it time to survey the awful sublimity of the scene, and to form a just conception of the Almighty author of the true sublime.—*Extract from the Author's 'Letters of a Sojourn in B. Guiana,' a work in M. S.*

## STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY THE CONTEMPLATION OF THE ABOVE SCENE.

"Tis Redonda we greet, with its lofty peak peering  
In fiery robes o'er the lone caribb sea—  
Hail ! Redonda—the pilgrim who to thee is steering,  
Holds, in soul-darkness, communion with thee !

For oft has the spirit of vision conveyed me,  
'Mid thy wildness, and then has the angel of sleep,  
The king of thy lone ocean, solitudes made me,  
To wander around thee, and wonder and weep !

Real, now in thy strength, thou art standing before me,  
And scorning the sweets of the neighbouring isles,  
Thou askest no palm tree—Heaven's glories are o'er thee,  
Ocean kisseth thy keystone, and laveth thy piles.

Who may ask thee for gold? for thy brow's pitchy scowling  
Answers ocean's unknown things are only mine;  
Yet my breast shrouds the stormbirds when tempests are howling,  
And sea monsters bask where my coral caves shine.

Who may ask thee for bread? Oh! thy wild voice of scorning  
Shall answer Ha! Ha! and thy sea birds shall shriek,  
For thy voice is the tempest—thy robe of adorning,  
Heaven's fiery streamers encircling thy peak!

For shelter who asks thee? Night's cold orbs shall shroud him,  
His pillow and couch be thy sharp flinty stone,  
And the cordial Despair and stern Fate have allowed him,  
Thy rain-drop and sea-spray commingled in one.

But art thou in vain? No! the gloom of thy grandeur  
Spreads abroad o'er the deeps with eve's sunbeams engraven,—  
And the Rover who sails from his spice isles of splendour,  
Hears around thee the voices of death and of heaven!

THE  
**SLAVE OF A CENTURY.**

---

During my sojourn in British Guiana, I had often occasion to visit the plantation on which Zambo, the slave of a century, resided. He was rated at thirty years of age on the day of his sale, which immediately followed his arrival from Africa, and was, by the estate's journal, an inhabitant seventy years. Though I knew instances of such longevity were not uncommon among West Indian slaves, yet, I was interested in knowing more of his story, from the extraordinary appearance he presented. He was sitting beneath an old and almost leafless fig-tree, in a part contiguous to the negro yard used for interment, apparently engaged in solemn attention to something, at that time, imperceptible to my senses. At his side lay his banjay, an instrument common to most African nations; it is a kind of rude lyre, and made of a stick like the handle of a fiddle, inserted in half of a hollow calabash, to which, and the end of the stick, are fastened three or more strings; it is played on by the fingers in the manner of a harp, and accompanied by the voice it produces melancholy notes like those of the harmonicon. As African music has but a scanty gamut, it is a constant attendant on the hours of glee which follow the negroes' cessation from labour. Hours in which, it would seem, the whole soul of the African is employed in the perpetuating of his wild native airs and songs; the recollection of which, age and slavery seldom impairs. Zamba's instrument was soon in requisition.—As if following or imitating unknown sounds, like the efforts of the nightingale, immortalized by one of our old poets, to match the lute, he sang a native African air accompanied by his banjay;—but his countenance seemed soon to undergo a convulsive change, and large drops followed in quick succession down the seared channels of his wrinkled cheeks, as he again sank into his former state of stupifying attention. There was something so unusually strange in poor Zamba's dotage, that I became anxious to fathom the fitful fancies of his melancholy. The setting sun and evening shell had already proclaimed a cessation of labour to the slaves, and they began to pass me, hoe on shoulder, with the anxious looks of weary mortals hurrying to rest and refreshment. Each, however, on passing Zambo and the fig-tree, skipped with a hurried and

agitated step to the farthest side of the path, and averting his glance from that poor object, travelled on quickly, as if something horrifying pertained to him. I felt delicate of bursting the "electric chain" that darkly bound him, by my intrusive queries, and resolved to gather food for my curiosity by interrogating his sable brethren—but it was in vain I beckoned any of them to approach the site of my cogitations.—Jim,—Profit,—Dublin,—Hercules,—Zwarto, I bellowed successively, but each, with the exception of the latter, pretended deafness, with true negro sagacity. I knew Zwarto to be a communicative, and, comparatively speaking, an intelligent negro, and bidding him approach, pointed to Zamba and the fig-tree, and questioned him if he knew why his old *papaw* (a negro term of respect for the aged), was so strangely affected? Zwarto made a long pause, as if afraid to give a direct answer in a place which he seemed to hold in awful veneration,—but at length exclaimed—"Luffey yaw so, massa," (come this way, master), and in a half whisper, stealing his eye to the fig-tree, "Zamba hab oboe story." "Oboe!" I exclaimed, with an affected laugh, as we withdrew from the magical ground.—Surely you do not believe such nonsense? Zwarto shook his head doubtfully,—then commenced his sketch of Zamba's biography, which he said he had often heard whispered mysteriously among the older African slaves.

Zamba was of the Ebo nation, the inhabitants of which are generally more handsome than their neighbours—tattooing their bodies as marks of distinction, and wearing a greater profusion of ornaments; but of more headstrong passions, violently addicted to the passions of love and jealousy, and the crime of suicide. He was born son to one of the Ebo princes, and Leas, the object of his attachment, was daughter to his sable majesty, the king of that nation. But Zamba having experienced by his attentions to his royal lover, the hatred of a less fortunate rival, he became the victim of a stupefactive draught, and on his awakening he found himself chained and manacled in the bonds of the white man, and was soon conveyed to one of those burning work shops of misery and marts of human flesh, a South American plantation. He bore the stripes of his taskmasters seemingly unmurmuring, but with smothered curses and plans of vengeance. Studying the inward structures of his fellow slaves' natures, and knowing what a mighty engine of annoyance to his white masters could be formed out of their gross superstitious feelings of magic, practised as a holy art in Africa, and religiously remembered by the African slaves in the colonies; he formed oboe meetings, and concocted by them, plans of revolt, which sometimes bursting, entailed signal vengeance on the heads of those whose marks and brands had seared his flesh like the trunk of an old tree, and laid open his very bones to the scorching beams of a tropical sun. He became crazed by his tortures,—a hut was built for him, retired from the rest of the slaves, and an old woman left him his victuals on his absence, as none dare enter in his presence. The ancient

fig-tree he had 'oboed' with many strange marks, and none dare approach it. Vine tendrils clung from the decayed and holed branches of the fig-tree, forming a curious bush harp, which, on being vibrated with the wind, produced many wild, and to a cursory observer of nature, mysterious sounds,—these were unremittingly imitated by Zamba, on his banjay. He said they were the voices of his Leas, and his friends inviting him home.—He always retired to his hut when the aspirations of the bush-harp ceased in the breezeless heats of noon day;—but during the morning and evening breeze, Zamba was constantly found under his "*Zambeam-fetitche*," or sacred thing of God. It was a part of his existence, of which it would have been cruel to divest him—his fellow slaves, indeed, were afraid to touch it, nay, look at it, and it was the cause a thousand wild *jumbey* or ghost stories. The aged, unearthly, and almost lifeless appearance of Zamba, outliving so many sufferings, instilled into the minds of his countrymen, the belief that he was a being whose spirit had already departed to its native country, and that he was but 'a thing of fear,' which the king of the skies had left among them as a sacred charm against all evils.

Zwarte having finished his information, proceeded to his home. The sun had now set in canopies of purple and blue, and I drew again close to the fig-tree, puzzling my brains like Milton's philosophical angels, about fate &c., but 'found no end, in wandering mazes lost.' Zamba had crept away from the fig, but there proceeded an indescribable thrilling sound from the vines chording the branches of its hollow trunk, which made his absence unfelt in the bewildered feelings it produced, I exclaimed with Cowper:—

There is in souls, a sympathy with sounds,  
And as the mind is pitched, the ear is pleased,  
With melting airs, or martial, brisk or grave;  
Some chord in unison with what we hear  
Is touched within us, and the heart replies.

\* \* \* \* \*

With easy force it opens all the cells  
Where memory slept.

One morning, on riding past the estate where Zamba had lived, after some years' absence from the country, I resolved to call and see if he were yet alive,—but, on approaching the cotton cultivation and the buildings, I found the estate abandoned—I proceeded up the middle path, but I heard no sounds except those of reptiles and insects. The negro huts were broken down, and their roofs were bending under a plentiful crop of corn and wild plantains. I looked a long time in vain for the site of the ancient fig-tree, and after a tedious search, found its stump concealed amid long grass and creeping vines—a large yellow snake had coiled in its hollow crevices, and I withdrew precipitously, as the fanged reptile erected its loathsome neck, hissing at me defiance, buried in thoughts of mortality, of which all things around me were living emblems, and experiencing that beat of heart and thrill of nerve, consequent on the odd curiosity which prompts us to fathom the strange anomalies of human nature.

## STANZAS

### TO THE SLAVE OF A CENTURY

---

He sat beneath an aged fig tree's wreck,  
 'Twas withered, rough, and leafless, but the vine.  
 Wild flowerets spread, its time-worn trunk, to deck  
 And hide with verdure fresh, its sad decline,  
 Not so with thee, poor Zamba ! sapless pine  
 Life's ghastly remnants :—while the fig's decay,  
 Is decked with flowers, gaunt nakedness is thine;  
 Even age has rent thy robe of flesh away,  
 To shew the relict bones that braved a century !

His sable curls to silvery tufts had turned,  
 His eyes, raw in their waters, seemed to break  
 Big tears of blood upon the slave-marks burned,  
 In channels deep, upon his skinny cheek !  
 His back, thick marked with many a deep, red streak  
 Was seared and mouldy to the very bone,  
 And as he crawled, his hollow bones did creak,  
 While still he cried "ah ! me," with piteous moan,  
 So each would shun the path of that loathed skeleton !

The evening winds sang through the withered boughs,  
 To which the vine chords clung—each quivering string  
 Of that wild forest-harp sang like the close  
 Of a death-chaunt o'er warrior's, trembling  
 By fits and starts.—Its dryad voice would sing  
 As if 'twas aëriel spirit chaunting there,  
 A lullaby to that forgotten thing,  
 The crawling remnant of the things that were—  
 That seemed by death let live to point his sepulchre !

The fig was Zamba's oracle—at even  
 Its cleft trunk was his lone and cherished haunt,  
 He loved its tones mysterious—and from heaven  
 His superstition traced its *oboe* chaunt ;  
 Nay, when it died in silence, he would pant  
 With anxious longing, 'till its bursting sigh  
 Again would breathe the strain his soul would want,  
 That brought sweet visions of his infancy,  
 Placing his land of dates before his dreaming eye.

Like his own pandian pipe that old tree breathed,  
 Sweet whisperings of the wild and plaintive glee,  
 He sang his Ebo love, when he had wreathed  
 Her neck with war spoils, gold and ivory :  
 That voice, long lost, yet cherished, haunts the tree,  
 Chiding his long sojourning—"Come, oh! come,"  
 It whispers "to your Leas, where the free  
 With joyous dance will hail your welcome home."  
 "I go! I go!" he cried—then wept to feel his doom !

A land, far in the distance, yet he knew  
 Where he would bask in freedom, when the chain  
 By death was broken, that the white man threw  
 O'er his long years of thraldom—struggles vain  
 To bnrst his slave-thongs, taught him, reckless pain,  
 And stripe and brand were doomed him, until he  
 Was summoned by the angel Death, again,  
 To hail the sunrise of his own bright sea,  
 And tell, with bitter curse, his long captivity.

Death, in idea, turns the tyrant pale ;  
 'Tis joy past utterance to the Afric slave,  
 For then, o'er death and chains shall man prevail,  
 Snatching his country's passport in the grave.  
 Delightful thought ! to glide the barrier wave,  
 Homewards away, upon the winds away,  
 Revel in glees his chainless boyhood gave,  
 And chaunt his raptures at his home banjay, \*  
 That welcomes him to joy, love, peace, and liberty !

Thou ruins of humanity that bears  
 Brand, stripe and thong-marks of a century's lot,  
 Thou thing unheeded in thy age's tears,  
 Outliving memory, friendless and forgot,  
 Slave of one hundred years ! oh what a thought,  
 To trace the picture of thy long sojourn,  
 That scene of shade, without redeeming spot,  
 And tale of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn,"  
 And visions of a land that mock thy home return.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis eve, pavillioned in the tropic cloud,  
 Sol sinking low, salutes the forest hems,  
 With pearly kiss, and twilight casts her shroud  
 Of tissues dark o'er the palm's towering stems ;  
 Yet boundless woods are hung with magic gems,

As eve's last sunbeam casts its dying hue—  
 And now, condensed in hallowed diadems,  
 Sol and his radiated fanes withdrew,  
 And o'er his crimson site spread veils of liquid blue.

Peers, from the bosom of the heaving sea,  
 The crest of Luna, and her golden beam  
 Obscures the silvery stars, and languidly  
 Shoots tints of orange o'er the milky stream.  
 Pale Moon, thou might'st to kindred spirit seem,  
 An eastern beauty, lovely in thy thrall,  
 Seeking in cypress grove, with amorous flame,  
 Thy hero, when the night winds rise and fall,  
 Humming Æolian sounds through thy bright coronal.

A beauteous night is beaming. Where is he  
 Who drank with awe, the wind's mysterious tone ?  
 The bush harp's voice is silent—mystery  
 Broods o'er the twilight—Ha ! the fig is gone—  
 Gone from its rootlets,—the voiced chords are strown  
 Amid its ruins.—Where is Zamba now,  
 Who cherished its wild harpings with his own,  
 And wept around it with convulsive brow ?  
 The sacred tones are hushed—and Zamba where art thou ?

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### THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS

*To his Masonic Brethren of Cork &c. and their Friends, who have forwarded the Publication of the preceding pieces.*

---

Brethren, to thee the artless bard has given,  
 The breathings of a reed whose school was heaven,  
 Earth, sea, the forest—all the splendid things,  
 That shone like day dreams on his wanderings.  
 Oh ! could the simple transcript which it draws  
 From Nature's grandeurs, meet with thy applause,  
 Within thy temples, overjoyed he might  
 Sing in the influence of thy sacred light.  
 A youth,—but old in sorrow, strange indeed,  
 If friendly welcome hail his forest reed,  
 Or give to him, unlaurelled and unknown,  
 A cheering suffrage for its plaintive tone.  
 His forest harp snatched from the wild caress,  
 That nature gave it in its wilderness,

Whose tendrils wound the poisoned manchineel,  
 Where showers and sunbeams were denied to heal.  
 Lost in the forest—darkened in the shroud  
 Of towering palm-trees, mocking as they bowed ;  
 Though evening's dews would tearful bathe its stems,  
 While tropic sparks would turn those tears to gems,  
 They were a moment's glimpse—a fitful ray,  
 That midnight tempests rudely tore away,  
 With many rents, through which the storm-gusts sung,  
 Giving his forest harp a Dryad's tongue,  
 Strange in its echoes, gusty, wild and shrill,  
 Yet with a mournful spell, whose plaintive thrill  
 Breathed woe too deep for words, and seemed to tell  
 Its master's anguish in a last farewell !  
 Strange, if such sighing willow, claim regard,  
 Or by its harpings honor its poor bard,  
 When silvered lyres, from a classic throng,  
 Sing, ceaseless sing, and make a *golden* song.

While earth is portioned to the proud and gay,  
 The bard in visions dreaming life away,  
 Finds their bright tissues towering all elate,  
 Burst in the adverse winds, neglect and fate—  
 Then shivering on his pall of straw and stone,  
 Sunk, spurned, neglected, in the world alone.  
 He tramps his harp amid its farewell fires,  
 And in the mockery of its tones, expires !

There is a bright dream in a weeping eye,  
 Speaks joyous, sweet, soul-thrilling exstacy—  
 There is a feeling in its ushering tear,  
 To self, to home, and brighter prospects dear !  
 'Tis a young minstrel leaves the banks of Lee,  
 Sighing fond adieu ! o'er a stormy sea—  
 Yet, as he turns him where yon sails unfurled,  
 Point to the *Pilgrim's Home*, a western world,  
 He sees the "eternal verge" beyond that line,  
 Where Masonry's unbroken beauties shine ;  
 And where, beloved ones, he can only tell  
 His soul's fond wishes to thee.—Fare thee well

# SONGS.

---

Songs of my soul ! like angel gleams  
Go to my fond one, ye, and say  
Ye are faint shadows of my dreams---  
A mirror of my mind away---  
Types of a love knew no decay,  
Burning the same at line and pole---  
Mementos of a dreary day,  
To show the workings of my soul :  
Go search her breast my plaintive strain,  
And if thou meet'st with half the thrill,  
That I have sung thee---not in vain  
My forest reed shall sing thee still.

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## THE MARINER'S DREAM.

Methought I left the golden zones, lands of the palm and vine,  
I bade farewell without a tear, a joyous soul was mine !  
I pledged no love sick troth afar, had won no heart away—  
No : home possessed my love, and home should see my bridal day ;  
The dark deep sea breathed sweets to me more than that spicey strand,  
My love shall clasp her love, I cried, love of my native land !

Swift o'er the seas ! swift o'er the seas, our sails and streamers fly,  
And in that bright dream of my hope, with gleesome soul sang I :  
This brine-tossed brain, shall yet again, on a fond breast pillow'd be,  
The pilgrim's cup o'erflow with joy—woe paying joy to me :  
Here's gold to strew before my love, rare gems to busk her grand —  
Ha ! ha ! beloved one of my heart, love of my native land !

Fly fast my bark ! fly fast my bark, swifter my good ship flew,  
'Till the sun that erst beamed o'er our heads, now low and chilly grew  
My voyage o'er in that wild dream, but how, it recketh not,  
With nervous throe of joy and woe, my true-one's home I sought ;  
'Twas dark and cheerlees, ah ! my heart—I felt no burning hand,  
No fond embrace—ah ! where's my love, love of my native land !

No voice of welcome in that hall, no glowing lips' salute—  
'Twas wild and worldless, as the voice of coffined mortal mute—  
I trembled, Ha ! a fiendish laugh burst through the dreary gloom,  
And mimicked by that sound, my song unearthly chaunt become !  
" Ha ! ha ! in vain you boast your gear, or proffer heart and hand  
Where earth worms crowd to share the shroud of the love of your  
native land ! "

## SONG II.

Sweet girl of my heart, say when slumber has bound thee,  
 Doth thy glance greet an eye beaming rapture divine ?  
 And the heart that once panted in extacy round thee,  
 Feel'st thou, then, its warm thrill to the boundings of thine ?

Dost thou soar with thy night-wings to climes of the palm tree,  
 Seek thy true one, and find him unaltered by climes ?  
 In bowers of olive where strange sweets embalm thee,  
 Pledge thy ever true vow 'neath his evergreen limes.

Oh thou hast,—then have I in the lone midnight hour,  
 Had moments of rapture and periods of pain—  
 For I woke and thou wert not—yet, sleep's magic power  
 Still bore thy fair cheeks to my fond lips again !

Thus, night-dreams of love to the lone and benighted,  
 Like min'stering seraphs in visions proclaim,  
 Though zones part our frames, still our souls are united,  
 And sleeping or waking, glow ever the same !

## SONG III.

No casket of gems, for thee, dearest, I have,  
 To deck that fond bosom, faithful and fair,—  
 But a heart that would moulder with thine in the grave,  
 And mix with its mortal ashes there !

Despite of the coquet's luring wiles,  
 And the vapoury flush of her languishing eye,  
 Love's surest token I draw from thy smiles,  
 And my heart treasures hope from thy artless sigh.

Titled lovers may boast of gaudy plumes,  
 Waving o'er features of parian hue—  
 Lovelier thou, in thy innocent blooms,  
 And thine eyes fairy gleams of celestial blue !

Love, pure and ardent, is herald of bliss,  
 With mock rainbow gildings who would it adorn,  
 The serpent shall lurk in his nectarless kiss,  
 And the little god's pinions be holly and thorn.

Nay—I'll bring thee no jewels from Indian cave,  
 Coffers of treasure none strew before thee—  
 Take a heart that would moulder with thine in the grave,  
 While its quenchless spirit would hover o'er thee

## SONG IV.

The last sunbeam lingered on Kearn's castle turrets,  
And slowly retired from Salla's bleak breast,  
When two lovers breathed the wish of their spirits,  
In a flower-woven arbour where seraphs might rest.

A dew-drop fell down from a blushing rose blossom,—  
"Twas caught by young Elinor's spotless hem,  
Oh ! a sylph, cried her lover, might fly to thy bosom,  
And cling to the sweets of that trembling gem !

"No : sorrow," she cried, "like that dew-drop suspended  
'Tween the hues of the rose and the damps of the heath,  
Is an emblem of love—so the tear-drop is blended,  
Where hearts and souls speak by the sighs that they breathe."

"Say not," he replied, "that the dew drop discovers  
A spectre of fate with its vision of doom—  
The gem from that rose-branch has fallen—but hovers  
To sparkle the morn when the flowerets bloom !"

## SONG V.

## IN ANSWER TO THE QUERY—WHY DO YOU SIGH?

Oh canst thou ask me why I sigh,  
Feel'st thou those burnings hands that press thee ?  
Read'st thou not in this swollen eye,  
A speechless pang whilst I caress thee ?  
Yea, honied torturings rend my breast,  
This fond heart thrills, within me dying—  
To be again, by thee, caressed,  
It mourns its hollow plaints by sighing ;  
Thou sighest too—thy heart beats high—  
Thy cheek imparts a raptured burning,  
Pay'st thou my sighing with a sigh ?  
Love, dost thou love ? or art thou spurning  
Those tokens of a heart as pure,  
As ever to its bosom bound thee ?  
No, spurn those smiles that but endure  
One faithless hour to flit around thee ;—  
Then by this starting tear of mine,  
That with thy sigh begins to quiver,  
And by that fluttering heart of thine,  
Our loves shall, quenchless, burn for ever

## SONG VI.

In vain, oh golden arbours! ye tempt with mellow vines,  
 To me thy fruitage uselessly in Eden livery shines:—  
 A lovelier glow than thine, I know, to match each luscious spray,  
 A taste composed of all thy sweets to bear the palm away.  
 The kiss that breathed my fond farewell, still lingering on my lip,  
 To quench its sweets were more than vain, thy honied pulps to sip,  
 Though glows with thousand rainbow hues, thy mantle, lovely zone,  
 And winterless and changeless, still on nature's breast hangs on—  
 While other orbs, the north sees not, impart their earthless hues,  
 And bright and sparkling diamonds turn thy twilights chrystral dews;  
 Though earth may mirror down the skies in nature's jubilee,  
 The home I love is thine Jane, my heart is there with thee.

Smile not on me, ye children of the sunbeam, though thy eyes  
 Are fraught with nature's charms untaught—her forest witcheries :  
 Those smiles are like night's lightening gleams on waters wild and  
 deep,  
 Where tempests laughing show their spoils, and we can nought but  
 weep—  
 For I am waxing low—my form grows wild and woe-begone—  
 Like relict of forsaken isles—and I that lonely one.—  
 A darkling blight lurks in my breast, though all around me smiles,  
 Thy living gleams may scorch my cheeks, but never, sunny isles,  
 Can ye one balm of hope impart, or opiate of rest,  
 To burst the glooms and thaw away the winter of the breast;  
 Then, all in vain, thy forest spells shall move my lone caress,  
 I leave ye mid thy palms and vines, in nature's loveliness,  
 For fairy sylphs, in visions sweet, my pilots soon shall be,  
 To guide my night skiff where Jane, my heart is home with thee.

Yes, day broods o'er my passion's storms, yet beautiful in night  
 Home visions burst in brilliancy!—and joy in silvery light  
 Her phantom halo o'er me throws, and all again seems gay,  
 For I am borne o'er earth and air, home on the winds away!  
 Come phantom thou of love and home prepare thy pinions meet—  
 Ha! how my soul shall bound and leave this world beneath my feet,  
 And we shall soar supremely o'er fields of burning air,  
 'Till home's glad halls fly back with joy and we shall pillow there—  
 Oh then the form I love shall fleet fond in my raptured clasp,  
 And I shall kiss her burning cheek with wild and reckless gasp,  
 Breathe o'er again the sacred vows that hallowed our farewell,  
 'Till rapture burst in agony, and visions lose their spell! [sea—  
 But northwards now, Home's own bright stars are twinkling o'er the  
 Soon to the land they gild, Jane, my soul shall soar to thee!

## SONG OF THE HARPER.—VII.

Beneath an aged oak, the last  
 Of Tara's forests once so vast;  
 A wandering, desolate harper passed,  
 He stopped and scanned it wistfully.

The leafless branches moaned, he sighed,  
 His eyes waxed dim in sorrow's tide,  
 As graven on the rind, he eyed  
 The magic word of 'Liberty.'

Upon the oak his form reclined,  
 Whose aged root fond shamrocks twined,  
 He swept his harp-chords on the wind,  
 Thus rose his vesper minstrelsy :—

" Ah ! oak, dark type of Erin's fate,  
 All hoary, sapped, and desolate,  
 One quenchless spirit, yet elate,  
 Bows to thee, shrine of Liberty."

" Oh God ! must I my anthem raise,  
 To patriot deeds of other days--  
 My sunken eyes on visions gaze  
 Of warriors wild—for wrathfully

" A brotherhood for strife arrayed,  
 Imploring slavery's shrieks obeyed—  
 I see my Henry's patriot shade  
 Shout ' Let's to Death or Liberty !'

" And there, sweet Emma, chosen love,  
 Her own Isle's shamrock garland wove,  
 She decks it on his brows above,  
 And whispers ' Wear it valiantly.'

" I see them 'mid the battle spring,  
 Where harp and voice united sing,—  
 Hail patriot song and silvery string,  
 The day is won for Liberty—

" Alas ! my phrenzied vision lies  
 In hope's false glimmering extacies,  
 They rout—they rush—my Henry dies—  
 Loud sounds the trump of tyranny—

" An angel rushes 'mid the foe,  
 Where they are trampling Henry low,  
 'Tis Emma—part them ! no—ah ! no—  
 She clasps her lover deathfully.

## SONG X.

TUNE—"HUMOURS OF GLEN."

*The Author's Farewell Address Song to St. John's Royal Larne Lodge, and R. A. C. No. 615. October, 3rd., 1832.*

Dear Brethren, I grieve thus at parting—and sorrow,  
 From my own Mother Lodge o'er the ocean to roam,  
 Yet a smile through the gloom of my grief I can borrow,  
 For I know the wide world is the Freemason's home.  
 Yon full moon that now on our Temple is beaming,  
 Shall pour her gold light on my cold ocean track,  
 Ah ! sadly 'twill come on my lorn spirit, dreaming  
 Of Brethren whose hail ne'er shall welcome me back.

But the voice of our Angel of Peace o'er the billow  
 Shall whisper me—"Son of the lone widow, come—  
 'Neath the sunbeams afar, I will find thee a pillow—  
 'Mid the Palms of the west, I will give thee a home.  
 Let peace wreath thy brows, and good-will be engraven  
 On thy heart, where thy soul, firm in faith, holds its shrine,  
 And the spell word I gave, shall obtain thee a haven,  
 And my Corn, Wine and Oil, be unlocked by a sign."

This wine-cup, I pledge thee, as deep e're we sever,  
 As the Heaven-made cup, whch the band only see ;  
 While my toast is our Number—oh ! may it for ever  
 Hold quenchless the light that proclaimeth it free.  
 Saint of Visions mysterious, Oh ! watch it and shield it,  
 To thee it is given—preserve it from blight ;  
 Though firm its foundation, in faith, firmer build it,  
 And give it a name in thy City of Light.

Farewell !—Ah ! this now is our last Cup, Companions !  
 Yet, the Bard and the Brother who bids thee adieu,  
 Beholds in his visions, those glorious dominions,  
 Where, in Light eternal, our works shall renew.  
 A Magical spell, Royal Art, thou art given,  
 To lighten our sorrows wherever we roam ;  
 And thy bright wings shall shroud me and shield me—for heaven  
 Has made every climate the Freemason's Home !



